

Message Text

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70

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 BIB-01 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 /060 W

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R 100903Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9488

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

FBIS OKINAWA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2768

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PROP CH

SUBJECT: DISTRIBUTION OF PRC JOURNAL HELD UP

1. ON MARCH 10 HONG KONG'S INDEPENDENT MING PAO REPORTED THAT THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF "CHINA PICTORIAL," WHICH ARRIVED IN HONG KONG SEVERAL DAYS AGO, WAS NOT BEING DISTRIBUTED. THE PRC MAGAZINE CONTAINS A 16-PAGE SUPPLEMENT IN COMMEMORATION OF THE DEATH OF PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI IN WHICH VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING'S EULOGY IS PROMINENTLY FEATURED. IN ADDITION, THE ISSUE ITSELF HAS A PICTURE OF TENG RECEIVING VISITING BURMESE DIGNITARIES.

2. ALSO ON MARCH 10, HOWEVER, FEI I-MIN BEFORE BEGINNING HIS CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN OFFICERS POINTEDLY HANDED THEM A COPY OF THE MAGAZINE IN QUESTION (CHINESE EDITION) WITH
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THE SUPPLEMENT. HE STATED THAT A LOCAL PAPER--HE CITED THE

KUAI PAO (EXPRESS)-- HAD DELIBERATELY MISLED PEOPLE ON THIS ISSUE. SAYING THEIR ARTICLE WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE TROUBLE, FEI PUT THE PUBLICATION IN POSITIVE TERMS, STATING THAT IT WAS REASSURING TO HIM AND TO CHINESE PEOPLE IN GENERAL. HOWEVER, HE DID INDICATE THAT HE WAS "SURPRISED" AT THE PUBLICATION OF A PHOTOGRAPH WHICH INCLUDED TENG HSIAO-PING ON THE INSIDE COVER OF THE MAGAZINE. FEI'S COMMENTS SEEMED DEFENSIVE, AND IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MING PAO AND KUAI PAO STORIES WAS CORRECT. IN THAT EVENT, THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEBRUARY ISSUE WOULD APPEAR AS A DIRECT RESULT OF TRYING TO AVOID A BAD IMAGE THROUGH NON-RELEASE OF THE MAGAZINE.

3. MING PAO FURTHER REPORTED THAT NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS IN CHINA HAD PLANNED TO DISTRIBUTE THE SUPPLEMENT IN FEBRUARY, BUT THAT RED FLAG SUDDENLY CANCELLED THE SUPPLEMENT. WHILE WE HAVE NO CORROBORATION OF THIS, IT WOULD HELP TO EXPLAIN WHY THE FEBRUARY EDITION OF RED FLAG MADE NO MENTION OF CHOU'S DEMISE, A RATHER STARTLING OMISSION FOR THE PARTY'S JOURNAL. HOWEVER, OTHER MAINLAND PERIODICALS DID DISTRIBUTE THE SUPPLEMENT AND THEIR OVERSEAS SUBSCRIBERS HAVE RECEIVED THEM.
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NNN

Message Attributes

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